



**Meeting 30 November 2017, BVA 7 Mansfield Street,
London W1G 9NQ (2.00 – 5.00pm)**

Notes of Meeting

Trustees present: Dan O'Neill (DON), Katharine Williams (KW), Carol Fowler (CF), Lesley Field (LF), David Grimsell (phone link), Fiona Cooke (3.00pm onwards)

Members present: Clare Rusbridge (CR), Tania Ledger (TL)

Advisors present: Sheila Crispin (SC)

Apologies: Stephen Charlton, Julia Carr, Charlotte Mackaness

Guest attendees: Charlotte Longster (CL) Pet Advertisers Advisory Group (PAAG) (Dogs Trust); Dr Daniel Allen and Prof Clare Holdsworth (Keele University); Helen Black (South Gloucestershire Community Voluntary Services)

Charitable Trust Registration

An additional meeting was held between 1.00 – 2.00pm for trustees in which Helen Black from the South Gloucestershire CVS explained the requirements from the Charity Commission for registration as a charitable trust and the legal responsibilities of the trustees. Our revised **Objects** are: **To promote humane behaviour towards animals by providing and supporting initiatives to improve dog welfare related to: a) genetic and breed-related health; breeding, rearing and selling practices; and b) to inform the general public about irresponsible dog breeding in order to make them aware of the potential impact on their dogs' health.**

DBRG is now a registered charitable trust No. 1176163 and DBRG's Governance will now be taken over by Katherine Williams.

1. Matters arising

None. Copies of the updated Canine Health Schemes *Hereditary Eye Disease in Dogs* Leaflet were distributed to members. Feedback questionnaires from the Symposium

were also available to view and handed over to CR. Hard copies of the DBRG Annual Report were also available to members and guests.

2. Keele University Study on Dog Breeding in the UK (Dr Dan Allen, Professor Clare Holdsworth)

Dr Dan Allen explained that the proposed research would look at dog breeding from a social science perspective and the social responsibility of all sectors and groups involved. The team at Keele University would like DBRG to be involved in this research as partners.

3. Pet Advertisers Advisory Group

Charlotte Longster from Dogs Trust gave the background to the Pet Advertisers Advisory Group (PAAG).

PAAG was set up 15 years ago to tackle misleading advertisements for puppy sales in newspaper classified advertisement pages. It has now expanded to include the on-line classified sites, such as Gumtree, Pets for Homes and Pre-loved. PAAG has pulled together animal welfare, veterinary and trade associations working with Defra and animal welfare teams in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. It works with websites to try to improve standards of advertising and has devised a list of 18 minimum standards:

So far PAAG has engaged with six websites and acts as an advisor to them but there are many more which remain outside its influence. There are additional problems with social media sites such as Facebook who see themselves purely as publishers and will not engage with PAAG.

4. Brexit and Animal Sentience

SC explained the differences between the Animal Welfare Act (2006) and Article 13 of the Treaty of Lisbon.

The 2006 Animal Welfare Act primarily places obligations on **owners and others who are responsible for an animal**. Article 13 is fundamentally different. It **places an obligation on the Government and other public bodies** to pay 'full regard' to animal welfare both when formulating and implementing **policy** on agriculture, transport, fisheries, research and technological development.

The widespread confusion over the fundamental differences led to a public outcry and in response the Government published a **draft Animal Welfare (Sentencing and Recognition of Sentience) Bill** on 12 December 2017 which recognises the welfare needs of animals as sentient beings and increases the maximum penalty for certain animal welfare offences.

5. DBRG Guide to Finding the Right Dog

The draft Guide is ready for members' comments and amendments.

6. Breedright Update

The resignation of Julia Charlton from the Breedright Working Group (and also as a member and trustee of DBRG) has meant that the remaining members of the Breedright Group (Chris Laurence, DG, FC, KW) need to discuss possible ways forward. Preliminary discussions have taken place in which the group has decided to continue with DG as its new Chair. A meeting is scheduled for January 20 2018 to discuss how the Scheme may be taken forward.

7. National Pet Show (NPS)

DBRG was represented at the NPS at the NEC in Birmingham 4/5 November 2017. A particularly good job was done by Fiona Cooke in engaging with members of the public. Many leaflets were distributed to the public and other stall holders.

The experience has shown that it would be very worthwhile for DBRG to attend such public events in future and engage directly with members of the public. DBRG is very grateful to the Cockapoo Club of GB for allowing us to share their space on this occasion.

8. DBRG Symposium, University of Surrey Vet School, October 22 2017

The success and attendance at the Symposium exceeded all expectations. Presentations from Sheila Crispin and Clare Rusbridge were excellent, not only in their scientific content but in the way Clare and Sheila entertained and engaged the audience. Clare and Sheila were joined by Dr David Sargan who updated the audience on his group's research into brachycephaly. The feedback from delegates was positive and encouraging.

Lessons were learned about sponsorship, ticket pricing and timing of the Symposium. It was agreed that DBRG should hold another Symposium in 2019 with a focus possibly on orthopaedics, health screening, estimated breeding values, behaviour/socialisation. This will depend on the willingness and availability of expert speakers. Recorded talks will be made available on the DBRG website for a limited time with a request for a donation.

9. Funding for DBRG

TL has agreed to enable the setting up of an on-line shop which will be linked to the DBRG website. It was also suggested that we should encourage a wider associate membership with a small fee to join. Ways will need to be found to make it worthwhile for people to join, such as providing regular newsletters, etc. Perhaps a new role of Membership Secretary will need to be created. CR suggested that vet students and vet nurses, many of whom are passionate about animal welfare, would be interested in becoming involved.

10. Position Papers

Two papers were discussed: 1) The 2006 Animal Welfare Act and the Protection of Offspring; 2) Animal Welfare in the School Curriculum

11. The Standard for Dog Breeding

There are references to Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) in the Standard. The Standard needs to refer specifically to these where appropriate and the SOPs should be available on the DBRG website linked to their specific items within the Standard.

Item 49 on the Standard for Dog Breeding includes the advice that puppy sellers should carry out home checks on potential puppy buyers. The agreed revised wording for item 49 is:

<p>49. Potential purchasers of puppies must be thoroughly questioned and checked by the breeder to ensure that they will be able to provide a suitable home and that they are committed to caring for the puppy for the whole of its life.</p>	<p><i>The breeder should ask about the potential purchaser's lifestyle and availability of resources to properly care for the puppy for the whole of its life. A certificate from a veterinary surgeon who knows the purchaser may be a useful means of monitoring. A visit by the breeder to the prospective new owner's home is ideal but not always possible. Photographs of the potential new owner's home and surroundings should be required. A secure garden is essential.</i></p>
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12. Update on Brachycephalic Working Group (BWG) (DON)

DON drew attention to the first Report of the Group, 'Framework for partnership approach to improving brachycephalic dog health and welfare.' He emphasised that the main focus of the group was to come up with solutions to reduce the impact of BOAS and other brachycephaly-related problems. The group is concerned with the rapid rise in ownership and number of brachycephalic dogs in the UK and the resulting rise in the number of dogs relinquished to re-homing organisations due to veterinary costs. Members of the group include the Royal Veterinary College (RVC), University of Cambridge, Bulldog, French Bulldog and Pug Breed Clubs, the BVA, BSAVA, Kennel Club, Dogs Trust, PDSA and RSPCA, owners, breeders and veterinary surgeons.

The role of the veterinary profession in raising public awareness and effecting societal change is recognised as being crucial.

LF emphasised the role of other breed clubs and BHCs in supporting the brachycephalic breed club members. She reminded us also that a new system of judging will be introduced by the KC in 2020/21 whereby all show judges will need to be qualified by the KC Judging Academy.

DON will keep us updated on the progress of the Brachycephalic Working Group.

Dates of meetings in 2018, March 1, June 7, September 6, December 6

All meetings in 2018 will take place at the Royal Veterinary College, Camden Campus (4 Royal College Street, Kings Cross, London NW1 OTU)